

On page 4, before line 26, insert

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

On page 7, line 21, after "Institut Pasteur" add

-- 28, rue du Dr Roux, 75724 Paris Cédex 15, France. --

On page 16, line 9, after "National Collection of Dairy Organisms" add

✓ (now referred to as the National Collections of Industrial and Marine Bacteria Limited (NCIMB)), 23 St. Machar Drive, Aberdeen AB2 1RY, Scotland, United Kingdom.) ✓

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please add the abstract provided on the separate sheet enclosed herewith.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel Claims 1-12 without prejudice.

Add new Claims 13-32 as follows:

13. A composition for use as an absorbable dietary supplement for human and animal consumption comprising more than  $10^9$  cells/gram propionibacteria, said propionibacteria capable of releasing a physiologically significant amount of nitric oxide into the human and animal digestive tract for improving intestinal functions.

14. The composition according to Claim 13, wherein said propionibacteria, after cultivating for at least 72 hours in a Yeast Extract Lactate medium containing at least 550  $\mu\text{mol/liter}$  of nitrate, is capable of releasing at least 5  $\mu\text{g}$  of nitric oxide.

15. A food product including a composition according to Claim 13, wherein said food product is selected from the list of cheeses, sources of dietary fibre, fermented milk, dessert cream, cake, and tonic drink